

LAND OF SUNSHINE.

ONE OF THE GARDEN SPOTS OF THE WORLD.

Fertile Soil Abundant Water and Other Inducements Offered to Home Seekers.

From N. M. Bureau of Immigration Report.

This county is one of the garden spots of the world, and lies on the western slope of the great continental divide, being part of the Pacific water-shed. Aside from its great resources as an agricultural and stock country its scenery is very beautiful. On all sides great rocky masses, broken into picturesque formations, are to be seen across wide, fertile valleys. The county is watered by three large rivers, and from their junction below Farmington the view is grand and impressive.

FARM LAND ON THE SAN JUAN.

In this valley, from a point about ten miles above Largo, there is a narrow strip of bottom land on each side of the river. At the town of Largo the river bottom widens out into rolling mesas and bottom lands which are available for cultivation. The most important of these tracts are known as the Bloomfield and Solomon mesas, which, with the bottom lands under them, will aggregate somewhat over 20,000 acres. They are on the north side of the river. From thence to the junction of the Animas, the mesa lands are broken into detached plateaus rather difficult to irrigate. The Animas and La Plata empty into the San Juan near Farmington. On the two points of land formed by the rivers are about 12,000 or 15,000 acres of fine land all under ditch. Beginning then at the mouth of the La Plata, and for twenty miles down the San Juan, to where it breaks through the Hogback, (a line of low hills) there is a continuous series of mesas with about a mile wide of bottom land. A little over 15,000 here are now under ditch. To the north of this are a series of high meadows, or vegas, estimated to contain 44,000 acres. Besides this, and to be properly considered in the San Juan basin, are the lands on either side of the Canon Largo, Canon Blanco and Canon Gallego. These will include the land along the river and down to the sixth correction line, north-south of this line there are twenty-four townships of land, the water facilities of which are only about the average of the arid region. They are covered by the headwaters of the Rio Chaco or Chusco and the Amarillo. At present this land is devoted to cattle and sheep raising, but the prospects of using a considerable area of this land for agriculture are very favorable. At present there is no demand for it and most of it is public land.

It may be said, therefore, that in the immediate San Juan valley there are about 60,000 acres of land, about 50,000 acres of which are now under ditch. A large area outside of this, on the high mesas, is susceptible of irrigation, and will ultimately be added to the irrigable area by means of high line ditches.

THE ANIMAS VALLEY.

The Animas river enters the county just east of the 108th meridian. It is formed by the junction of two important torrential streams, and will irrigate, if properly handled, 40,000 acres of fruit land. Of this amount 10,000 or 12,000 acres are already under ditch, and it would not be wise to advise large settlement on any new lands, unless some scheme were devised by which the whole amount of the water could be handled by some comprehensive authority. This river flows thirty miles within San Juan county. The farming lands begin at Cox's crossing and take in a strip varying from a quarter of a mile to three miles in width and about twenty-five miles in length. The Animas has a minimum flow of 2000 cubic feet per second. One of the peculiarities of this and the San Juan river is that the bottoms are composed of beds of small, round, water-worn boulders of unknown depth. More water flows in this boulder bed than on the surface. Along in the river valley proper there are about 18,000 acres of good land, the most important area of which is from Aztec to below Flora Vista.

FARMINGTON GLADE.

Besides the valley of the Animas there is an important area of land included in the Farmington Glade, an interval between the Animas and La Plata rivers. It is a strip of country two or three miles wide by eighteen miles long. It will aggregate 25,000 acres of good irrigable land well adapted to fruit raising. In the glade, and beginning at about the latitude of Aztec, is a fine body of public land, subject to desert land entry, that would make homes for a small colony. The ditch would be comparatively inexpensive as a natural opening in the hillside affords easy entrance to the glade. If water

were brought to this place there is no better piece of land for raising deciduous fruits. It is protected, fertile and beautiful.

THE LA PLATA VALLEY.

The La Plata river flows in a deep, sandy bed, and its waters generally disappear in the last week in August or the first week of September. On the upper part of this river after it enters San Juan county there are about 8000 acres cultivated; and at Jackson, near its mid-course, there is a small Mormon colony who till about 1000 acres. The river has an average fall of forty feet to the mile, is about thirty feet wide and has a mean average flow of about 250 cubic feet per second. The ultimate reclamation of lands in the La Plata valley will be large.

ACTUAL WATER RESOURCES.

It will be seen from the foregoing that there are available from these three rivers 6250 cubic feet of water per second. At the low estimate of 160 acres to each cubic foot, this is sufficient to irrigate 1,000,000 acres of land. According to a county pamphlet issued for circulation at the World's fair, there are 175,000 acres available for irrigation. In addition to the value of the water for irrigation, it is a constant source of water power. The San Juan and Animas are constant streams, not affected by the most enduring drought. The wasted power of their waters would furnish heat, light and electrical motive force far in excess of any possible need of this county. At present the only use made of all this wealth of water is to irrigate about 25,000 acres, the larger part of which is under ditches owned by small associations of farmers.

AZTEC.

The modern civilization has followed the same lines of settlement as did the ancient. Aztec is the county seat, situated on the southeast bank of the Animas. It has a bank, several large stores, hotel and livery and stage stables. The county jail is a well built, steel lined adobe structure. The surrounding country is well cultivated, the farms extending up and down the river for several miles. At this point the valley is about two miles wide. Fruit, alfalfa, grain, potatoes and all the root crops give abundant harvests. Apples and tomatoes seem peculiarly adapted to the soil. The population of the town and surrounding country is between 550 and 600 persons.

FLORA VISTA.

This little village and vicinity has a population of about 250 souls. It is situated at about the widest part of the Animas valley, seven miles from Aztec, raises the same crops and its orchards are spreading; alfalfa fields have a particularly good appearance.

FARMINGTON.

Farmington and Junction City are situated at the mouth of the Animas. The population is about the same as at Aztec. The location is very beautiful. At this point the full scenic beauty of the valley reveals itself. From a little hill overlooking the town a solid plantation of three or four square miles, including orchards, alfalfa fields, grain and meadow is seen. Here is at present the densest population of the county and the widest spread of cultivation. The three valleys here converge into the main valley of the San Juan. There are several good stores, public stables, good schools and general facilities. Near this town are located several brick kilns, a saw mill and a roller process flour mill. It is a very pretty, go-ahead place. Its citizens are full of energy and public spirit.

LARGO.

This town may be considered the center of population on the upper San Juan. Taking in with it the little settlement on Pine river and at Bloomfield, the population is between 1000 and 1200 persons, the majority of whom are of Spanish descent. The high culture of the fields, orchards and vineyards speaks well for the progress of the community.

THE LOWER SAN JUAN.

Olio, Fruitland and Jewett are situated on the San Juan below its junction with the La Plata. The population of the three is about 600 persons. The greater part of the land is under a fine modern canal and in a high state of cultivation. At Fruitland is one small orchard of seven acres from which the annual net return has been over \$2,500 per annum for the past five years. This is the property of the resident Mormon bishop and is cultivated according to the theory of his people that a small place well cared for is more valuable than broad acreage poorly farmed. It is one of the best instances of intensive culture in the territory.

LA PLATA.

This place can hardly be called a town. It is a compact farming community, however, of about seventy well cultivated homesteads at the head of the La Plata valley. On the western side the land rises in three terraces, one over the other, every one of which is highly cultivated. The sight would remind one more of

a French landscape than a western community as yet removed from railroads, and ten years ago given over to the Indians as a hunting ground. Alfalfa and fruit are the principal productions. This part of the county is a very picture in its picturesque fertility. The Aztecs also thought well of it, and many of their monuments in the shape of rudely pictured and sculptured rocks abound.

CROPS.

The first trees were planted in this county ten years ago, and as an experiment seemed very doubtful. The first settlers were principally cattle men, who knew little about farming. They profited by their first mistakes, however, and prospered, so that the reputation of these valleys is known all over the southwest. The southern towns of Colorado, outside the San Luis valley, are almost wholly supplied from the San Juan orchards. So remunerative has fruit culture proved that in 1891 23,000 trees were planted, and in 1892 about 50,000. The planting of 1893 is not yet accurately known, but will show a ratio of progress. Last year at the Albuquerque Territorial fair the fruits of this county took the sweetest prize. The peaches in some instances measured nine inches in circumference, apples thirteen to fourteen inches and weighed sixteen to nineteen ounces. Single acres of fruit land return from \$400 to \$500; and in one orchard near Farmington are three trees, of whose yield an accurate account has been kept for four years past, that show an average return of \$53 per tree.

Cereals of all kinds are grown here, wheat yielding 20 to 40 bushels per acre; oats, 30 to 80 bushels; barley, 30 to 60 bushels; rye, 15 to 30 bushels; corn, 25 to 50 bushels. A ready sale is found at good prices. Current prices for 1893 are as follows: Wheat, per cwt. \$1.40; oats, \$1.50; barley, \$1.40; corn, \$1.50; bran, per ton, \$18. Vegetables of every variety flourish, from the hardier varieties, such as Irish potatoes, turnips and beets, to the more tender melons, egg-plants, tomatoes, etc.

ALFALFA.

Is, however, the staple crop in this county; drought is not to be feared and neither frost nor cold endanger it. Owing to the advantageous situation of the county the farmers have taken to fattening beef cattle. For this purpose the sales of alfalfa are large, frequently amounting to from 500 to 1000 tons to a single buyer. From 1891 to 1892 the increase in alfalfa production amounted 7000 tons. The average yield per acre is from 4 to 10 tons.

MINERAL WEALTH.

This whole county is underlaid with coal. The beds have not been prospected to any extent. They are known, however, to contain almost unlimited quantities of coal. On the San Juan river, opposite Fruitland, is a truly notable exposure of this valuable fuel. It stands above the river 34 feet and is over 300 feet long, and extends back into the bluff on a very slight dip, it is supposed for miles, as there is an immense mesa stretching in that direction. Immediately across on the north side of the river other huge beds appear, and these then stretch up the La Plata for nearly fifty miles. This coal is a hard, free burning quality. An experienced Cornwall miner, who is working one of these veins on the La Plata, says he never saw mines so easily opened or that so quickly yielded good merchantable coal. All that seems to be necessary is to strip the outer layer, which has been exposed to the weather for ages, and the fine, glittering material is found, free from slate or "bone" and ready for use. Some difference of opinion exists as to the quality of this coal, but the bureau of immigration can state on the authority of its agent that it is of a good coking character. Some of it, in his presence, was covered with sand and fired on the ground and in a short time was roasted into a fine silver coke with a ring like metal. The coal in this county is usually found in a thick strata between slate and sandstone of a very fine grain. It is said that gold and metallic iron can be found; and the best building stone, both sandstone and granite, abound. The best mining camps of Colorado and splendid mineral belts in New Mexico are contiguous. When railroads penetrate this county the neighborhood of Olio will afford splendid opportunities for large smelters.

Patented land with water can be had at from \$15 to \$50 per acre. Besides this there are thousands of acres of government land that can be had for the cost of filing on it.

Among the many enterprises which would flourish in this county may be mentioned a wool scouring plant and woolen mills. Water and coal are abundant and free. The only expense will be in developing.

Crops and Prices of 1893.

The following table shows the fruit yield of the county and average market price of 1893:

	YIELD	PRICE
Wheat, bushels	24,250	\$1.40
Oats	22,300	.75
Barley	25,000	.75
Pot. tons	10,000	.75
Onions	15,000	1.25
Tomatoes	2,500	1.75
Apples, pounds	900,000	.03
Peaches	250,000	.04
Plums	7,500	.05
Cherries	40,000	.15
Strawberries	100,000	.04
Raspberries		.20
Blackberries		.20
Currants		.20
Gooseberries		.08

Besides the produce mentioned in the foregoing table the county produced 35,000 pounds of honey at an average price of 12½ cents a pound, and 30,000 tons of alfalfa hay which averaged \$5 per ton.

Questions Answered.

Irrigation is the best means of fertilizing land.

Every kind of deciduous fruit can be raised here.

As a fruit raising country the San Juan has no equal.

Water can be put on arid land at a cost of from \$2 to \$15 per acre.

New Mexico took first prize for wheat at the World's fair, and second for oats.

The last census gives thirty acres as the average size of an irrigated farm in New Mexico.

As a health resort for persons with weak lungs San Juan county has few peers and no superiors.

Rough lumber here is worth \$25 per thousand, brick \$8 per thousand, and lime 40 cents per bushel.

Fire clay is found in large quantities on the lower San Juan, and a fine quality of fire brick can be manufactured at a nominal cost.

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Experts pronounce the San Juan coal as a steam producing coal far above the average, if not the very best quality in the world.

Any information relative to the county not given in the columns of The Times will be cheerfully furnished upon application to the publisher.

Water rights in company ditches cost from \$2 to \$15 per acre, with an additional cost of from \$1 to \$2 annually per acre to pay for repairs. In most cases this annual assessment can be worked out.

Sheep do well in this county. Scab and other sheep diseases are unknown here. Thousands of acres of government land are contiguous to the streams and watering places on which they can graze nearly every month in the year. Large bunches of the weathers can be fattened on alfalfa hay during the winter, and the main flocks carried over on it at a small cost, thus making sheep raising a profitable industry. The native sheep make a most excellent cross to breed the mutton producing strains of eastern sheep to.

A tannery is needed and would be a good investment in this county. There are over 500,000 acres of cana-gria growing wild here. It yields as high per acre as ten tons wild and from thirty tons upward under cultivation. This plant contains 33½ per cent of tannic acid, the highest average of any known agent. The tannery would be furnished with a home supply of tanning matter without the cost of a cent of freight. This cana-gria is being shipped to Europe at a cost of between \$80 and \$100 per ton, several firms there using it for the preparation of their best grades of leather.

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